Creative Writing masters

CREATIVE WRITING MA/MFA
CREATIVE WRITING LOW RESIDENCY MA

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

www.kingstonwritingschool.com
About the Creative Writing MA/MFA

Course overview
Our MA and MFA (Master of Fine Arts) courses are uniquely flexible programmes designed to enable you to develop the craft of creative writing while specialising in a chosen genre of popular literature: fiction, children’s literature, creative non-fiction or poetry. The approach we take is very practical, with no distinction between writers working in different genres or disciplines; for example, a thriller writer is as welcome as a poet, and both will learn a great deal about their craft.

You will receive expert guidance and rigorous, constructive feedback from established, published creative writers in the genre or form of your choice. Professional writers and visiting professors provide regular input to workshops in specific genres or forms.

Kingston University is proud to offer the first Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing available in the UK. This course gives talented and aspiring writers the chance to refine their skills under the tutelage of acclaimed professionals, while having the chance to receive accredited training and experience in teaching in higher education. Admissions to the two-year (full-time) or four-year (part-time) MFA will be highly selective and based upon the quality of a writing sample as well as an assessment of your publishing potential.

Careers
These courses will provide you with a detailed knowledge and expert awareness of the power of the written word, and are particularly valuable if you wish to enhance your career in publishing, journalism, teaching, the arts, communications or creative writing. The unique combination of creative and practical skills provided by these courses will also allow you to prepare yourself simultaneously for a career as a writer and a workshop facilitator in creative writing, as well as in advertising, publishing, the public service, business and the creative economy.

Support and advice
Students are supported through a dedicated personal tutor scheme and through contact with module leaders and the course director. E-learning is used through online forums, and language support is offered to students who do not have English as a first language.

Research areas
In addition to being published authors, many of the staff are research active, which informs their teaching. This ensures they are in touch with the latest thinking and bring best practice to your studies. Areas of research include the following:

- 19th- and 20th-century British and American fiction
- Fictions of globalisation
- Modernism
- Gothic writing
- Travel writing
- Literary representations of the Balkans
- Narratives of slavery
- Women’s writing from the 18th-century to the present
- New Woman and fin de siècle fictions
- Shakespeare
- Literature of the English Reformation period
- English women’s religious poetry during the 17th-century
- Postcolonial studies

This research focuses around three initiatives:

- Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies – established in 2004 to oversee research on the Iris Murdoch archives acquired by Kingston University in 2003/4
- Performing History (in collaboration with Hampton Court Palace) – a project that looks at early Tudor plays in performance at Hampton Court, and the relationship between architectural space and the performance of drama
- Centre for Suburban Studies – committed to pioneering interdisciplinary approaches to the study of suburbia

What you will study
Creative Writing MA
You will have opportunities to develop your creative writing skills in general as well as specialise in a chosen genre. You will study literary criticism and theory, and develop an understanding of professional skills and development, such as copyediting, structure and style, and how to get your work published. You will have the unique opportunity to work in a focused workshop, in which you will develop your craft on a one-to-one basis or in small groups with experts in your chosen genre, working towards producing a substantial piece of creative writing.

You can write within your chosen genre from the beginning of the course or experiment within various genres in the first stages. The Special Study module is designed to enable you to fully concentrate on your chosen specialism. Experts in poetry, prose writing, creative non-fiction and hybrid forms will work with you on refining your genre choice. In the subsequent dissertation modules, you will be encouraged to fully explore and engage with (or against) the codes and conventions of your chosen genre. These may include specialisms such as travel writing, writing for children, experimental or plot-based fiction, drama or screenplay, short story and/or hybrid forms or poetry.

Optional extras include a weekly session with visiting publishers, editors and agents, and all modules are taught within a context that provides extracurricular opportunities, such as guest readings, masterclasses, a student-led literary magazine and a student reading series.
Creative Writing MFA
The first stage of the MFA includes two writing workshops where you present and discuss your own and other students’ work. You will also take the Ten Critical Challenges for Creative Writers module, as well as Structure and Style, a module designed to enable you to experiment outside your genre of writing. In addition, you will write a 15,000-word creative dissertation.

In stage two of the MFA, after completion of the modules shared with the MA, you will attend smaller, more-focused writing workshops. You will also attend seminars designed to improve your critical reading skills. The MFA spring writing-teaching workshop will feature experienced guest writers and teachers from around the world – recent and forthcoming guests include Steve Erickson (Zeroville), director of the Cal Arts MFA; Brian Evenson (The Open Curtain), director of the MFA at Brown University; and J Robert Lennon (Castle), director of the MFA at Cornell University. The MFA guests will also offer one-to-one tutorials.

You will receive the MFA qualification on completion of the advanced dissertation project in stage two of the course. The one-to-one supervision for this advanced dissertation (40,000 words or the equivalent) will be conducted by one of the course’s permanent staff, one of our writers-in-residence or an editor from a leading UK publishing company. You will also have the option of participating in modules that lead to the award of Kingston University’s Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. The teaching practice necessary to complete this certificate entails leading undergraduate classes under supervision. There may also be opportunities to gain experience assisting with book publication at Kingston University Press, which offers a number of bursaries annually.

Course content – Creative Writing MA

Core modules

The Writers’ Workshop will encourage you to present and discuss your own and each other’s work in a weekly workshop. The draft work presented may include several genres and forms, such as crime writing, fantasy fiction, children’s literature, historical fiction, science fiction, romance and autobiography. Practical criticism will be accompanied by discussion of the scope or constraints of the various genres, as well as the implications of particular forms. Attention will be paid to the components of good writing: appropriate use of language, narrative pace, dialogue, expression, characterisation and mood.

Structure and Style will provide the opportunity to write across three genres – including prose, poetry and playwriting – and will teach you how to apply literary techniques from other forms to your own work. It will include an in depth look into issues of voice, imagery, tone and characterisation, as well as elements of narrative, dramatic and lyrical forms. Contemporary works will be studied so that you can master structure and style and understand how various literary forms function. You will submit a portfolio of writing exercises in the different genres studied.

Special Study: Workshops in Popular Genre Writing offers a regular and intensive review of your writing in one of the following genres: poetry, crime writing, prose fiction, biography, drama, scriptwriting or writing for children. You will be advised on how to strengthen your knowledge of the codes and conventions of your chosen genre to produce a substantial piece or collection of work that will reflect your knowledge of and engagement with your chosen genre. You will receive detailed feedback on your work, which you will apply to your writing, and will use your increased knowledge of your chosen genre to make your writing more effective. These elements will help you improve the key transferable skills of analysis and implementation that will feed forward into your dissertation module and into all analytical/practical tasks you subsequently undertake.

Ten Critical Challenges for Creative Writers is designed to introduce you to some issues of critical and literary theory. The module is also designed to make you more aware of how your work impacts upon wider literary, cultural, political and philosophical issues. Awareness of these theories and of some of the issues surrounding the production and reception of literary texts aims to stimulate you and encourage creative and conceptual thinking. You will explore debates about literature and the practice of creative writing through readings of essays and texts that are relevant to criticism and theory. The academic component of the assessment will support the creative work and demonstrate your critical, academic and analytical skills.

Creative Dissertation and Critical Essay is devoted to writing and research carried out in your chosen form or genre. It is developed in consultation with your supervisor and taught via one-to-one tutorials. You will produce a creative dissertation, which will take the form of a portion of a novel, poetry, a play, screenplay or other creative form of no more than 15,000 words, as well as a critical essay of approximately 3,000 words that will consider the relationships between your writing and the literary contexts and theoretical concerns that inform a range of published writing in your chosen genre or form.
Course content – Creative Writing MFA

**Core modules** (see Creative Writing MA, left, for module descriptions)
- Writers' Workshop
- Structure and Style
- Special Study: Workshops in Popular Genre Writing
- Ten Critical Challenges for Creative Writers
- Creative Dissertation and Critical Essay

**Advanced Dissertation Project** provides one-to-one supervision over an extended period of time to produce a complex piece or collection of pieces of creative writing. The module is assessed in two ways: by a creative dissertation of 40,000 words or prose (or equivalent in other genres) that may take the form of a single sustained piece of writing or a collection of pieces from a suitable range of genres; and by a critical reading log of approximately 4,500 words.

**Option modules (MFA)**
- Accredited modules in teacher training

**Non-assessed (formative) modules**
- Advanced Writers’ Workshop
- Advanced Critical Reading for Creative Writers
- Peer-led Teaching and Writing Workshops

Course content – Creative Writing Low Residency MA

**Course overview**
This Creative Writing Low Residency MA provides the opportunity to work with a range of established and award-winning writers in the most dynamic writing environment in the UK, without having to relocate or give up your current job.

Developed to complement the University’s growing and acclaimed suite of courses in creative writing, the low-residency option enables you to complete the majority of your credits through distance learning while enjoying both accredited and non-accredited residency periods on campus, scheduled in mid-September and early June. All residency periods combine writing workshops with critical reading seminars, masterclasses, guest readings, supervisions and visits to cultural events in London. Accommodation is located close to the University and arranged before arrival by the course team.

**What you will study**
The low-residency programme follows the same course structure as the popular Creative Writing MA degrees (see left).

If studying full time, you will take two 30-credit modules in semester 1, combining the first residency module with a Writers’ Workshop module. In semester 2, you will take two more 30-credit modules; this time following your choice of a Special Study workshop with your second residency module in June. During this time you will complete work on structure and style begun online, while participating in general workshops and reading sessions and tutorials with your assigned dissertation supervisor. MA students may then choose to complete a 15,000-word, 60-credit dissertation accompanied by a 3,000-word critical review. You will begin to plan your dissertations as part of the June residency, and will receive one-to-one supervision as you work towards a September completion.

Instruction during the residency periods will combine small group workshops and reading classes, with readings by colleagues, writers-in-residence, students and guests. Modules delivered by distance learning will be organised with staff–student ratios of 8:1 at the most, and will include individual tutorials. You will be able to access supporting materials, including streamed lectures and readings held at or sponsored by the University.

Special features

- Our teaching staff includes prize-winning authors and leading practitioners: Hanif Kureishi, playwright Winsome Pinnock and novelist Adam Baron.
- You will benefit from our UK-based writers-in-residence, such as Liz Jensen and Paul Bailey, as well as visitors such as J Robert Lennon and Brian Evenson.
- The reading series has welcomed leading innovators. Speakers include Will Self, Ali Smith, CD Wright and, recently, David Lehman, Daisy Goodwin, Jen Hadfield and Bill Manhire.
- The flexibility of the MA and the MFA gives you the chance to develop your creative writing skills in general, or specialise in a specific genre.
- You will receive expert guidance and constructive feedback from established, published creative writers in the genre of your choice.
- Professional writers and visiting professors provide regular input to workshops and a range of voices and styles to extend your experience of approaches to writing.
- You will be introduced to the professional elements of writing by experts such as copy editors, producers, literary agents and literary editors.
- We also offer a joint MA in Creative Writing and Publishing – see the University’s website for more details.
- In tandem with our Publishing MA, we have links with publishing companies and agents.
- Faber and Faber sponsors a prize for the Creative Writing MA.
**Teaching staff**

Our creative writing courses are taught by a combination of appointed staff, writers-in-residence, guest speakers with expertise in the area of publishing, and visiting writers.

**Diran Adebayo** is a novelist, short fiction writer and cultural critic best known for his stylish, inventive tales of London and the lives of African diasporans. His work has been characterised by its interest in multiple cultural identities, subcultures, and its distinctive use of language. His debut novel *Some Kind of Black*, won him numerous awards, including the Writers Guild of Great Britain’s New Writer of the Year Award, the 1996 Saga Prize, a Betty Trask Award, and The Authors’ Club’s ‘Best First Novel’ award. It was also long listed for the Booker Prize, and is now a Virago Modern Classic. His second novel, the ‘neo-noir fairytale’ *My Once Upon a Time*, solidified his reputation as a groundbreaker. He’s appeared on ‘Newsnight’, ‘The Culture Show’, ‘This Week’ and the ‘Today’ programme, discussing everything from politics to popular culture, including sports - the centrepiece of his next book, the memoir, *Random, and Cricket.* In 2003 The Times Literary Supplement named him one of its Best Young British Novelists and, in 2006, Diran was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

**Katherine Angel** (Lecturer in Creative Writing) writes literary non-fiction. Her first book, *Unmastered: A Book On Desire, Most Difficult To Tell,* was published in 2012 (Penguin/Allen Lane; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; KlettCotta/ Tropen). She is completing her second book, an exploration of subjectivity and selfhood in contemporary sex research. Her writing has appeared in *The Independent, Prospect, The New Statesman, Aeon, The Los Angeles Review of Books,* and *Five Dials,* and she reviews for the Times Literary Supplement and Poetry Review. She also collaborates with performance group The Blackburn Company on live art readings of her work. She has a PhD from the University of Cambridge, and has held research posts at the University of Warwick and Queen Mary, University of London. Her interests include feminism, gender, sexuality, psychiatry, first-person writing and memoir, and poetry-prose hybrid forms.

**Paul Bailey**, distinguished writer-in-residence, has been shortlisted twice for the Booker Prize and has won a clutch of other awards. His novels include: *At the Jerusalem, Peter Smart’s Confessions, Gabriel’s Lament, Sugar Cane, Kitty and Virgil,* and *Uncle Rudolf.* Non-fiction includes: *An English Madam: The Life and Work of Cynthia Payne, An Immaculate Mistake: Scenes from Childhood and Beyond,* and *Three Queer Lives: An Alternative Biography of Naomi Jacob, Fred Barnes and Arthur Marshall.* He also edited the *Oxford Book of London.* Paul has taught at the University of East Anglia and in Italy.

**Adam Baron** is a novelist. He has published four crime novels (Macmillan), which have been translated into Greek, French, and German. His novels have been adapted for BBC Radio 4. His next work, a literary novel called *Blackheath,* will be published in February, 2016 (Myriad Editions). He is MA Course Director for Creative Writing at Kingston University. He will be taking part in the Kingston Writing School reading series and teaches Writing that Works, Narrative Techniques in Popular Fiction and various modules on the MA in Creative Writing.

**Professor Norma Clarke** is a literary historian, critic and biographer with particular interests in the eighteenth century. She has published a number of books on women writers: *Ambitious Heights, Dr Johnson’s Women, The Rise and Fall of the Woman of Letters and Queen of the Wits: A Life of Laetitia Pilkington.* Her latest book, a study of obscure writers in Grub Street and the beginnings of commercial literary culture, will appear in Spring 2016: *Brothers of the Quill: Oliver Goldsmith and Friends* (Harvard University Press).

Professor Clarke also specializes in fiction. She has published five novels for children (*Patrick in Person, Patrick and the Rotten Roman Rubbish, Theo’s Time, Trouble on the Day,* and *The Doctor’s Daughter*) and teaches children’s and young adult fiction on the English Literature undergraduate programme.
Steven Fowler is a poet, artist and curator. He works in the modernist and avant garde traditions, across poetry, fiction, theatre, sonic art, visual art, installation and performance. Thematically he’s interested in violence and physicality, and his work has explored this in both the interpersonal and wider societal senses.

He also is interested in city and space, historical models of truth (having worked for nearly a decade in the British Museum) and neuroscience and language (currently in residence at Wellcome Trust.) He also teaches art history at Tate Modern, and has an interest in how literature has intersected with art, or been erroneously separated from it. Academically he is interested in philosophical ethics, through pragmatism mostly, and the 19th, 20th and 21st avant garde and modernism. His specialty is modern European literature.

Steven is the editor of 3am magazine and the curator of the Enemies project, which explores collaboration and contemporary poetry www.theenemiesproject.com

Oli Hazzard (Lecturer in Creative Writing) is the author of two books of poems, Between Two Windows (Carcanet, 2012) and Within Habit (Test Centre, 2014). He is particularly interested in the New York School of poets, Anglo-American literary exchange, and contemporary fiction. He teaches The Craft of Poetry and Prose and Get a Life: Forms of Autobiography.

Dr Meg Jensen (Associate Professor of English Literature and Creative Writing) is a novelist, researcher and published academic writer. She is Director of Kingston’s Life Narrative Research Group. Her particular area of research interest is the relationship between trauma and autobiographical writing and she also works on women’s writing, American literature and modernist experiments. Her creative non-fiction ‘Something Beautiful for Mary’ appeared in New Writing in 2012, and in 2014 she co-edited a major collection for University of Wisconsin, Life Narratives and Human Rights to which she contributed a chapter on the science of traumatogenic writing. She has recently completed a third novel, Swimming in Hurricanes. In Creative Writing she teaches Writing that Works, Independent Creative Writing and Creative Dissertation.

Professor Hanif Kureishi is the multi-award-winning author of numerous novels, essays, stories and screenplays. His early work includes the seminal My Beautiful Laundrette and The Buddha of Suburbia. His more recent works include Gabrielle’s Gift and My Ear at His Heart. He also wrote the screenplay for the acclaimed film Venus, which was released in early 2007.

Hannah Lowe is a poet and memoirist. Her writing often addresses issues of migration, diaspora and mixed-race identities in both historical and contemporary contexts. Her first full collection of poetry is Chick, and her most recent publication is a family memoir Long Time No See which featured as Radio 4’s Book of the Week this year. She has also published a number of chapbooks, including Ormonde, a fusion of archival material and poetry exploring the arrival of Caribbean migrants including her father, to Britain in 1947. In Creative Writing she teaches Introduction to Creative Writing, Independent Creative Writing and the Craft of Poetry and Prose.

James Miller is MFA Course Director and the author of the highly acclaimed novels, Lost Boys (Little, Brown 2008) and Sunshine State (Little, Brown 2010). His short fiction has been published in a wide range of places including the anthologies Still (Negative Press, 2012) Beacons: Stories for our Not So Distant Future (Oneworld, 2013), in the Galley Beggar Press singles club and in numerous magazines including Litro and 3AM Magazine. His research interests include African-American literature, experimental literature and critical theory.

Winsome Pinnock (Head of Department) has been teaching and writing for the last twenty years. Her award-winning plays include The Wind of Change (Half Moon Theatre, 1987), Leave Taking (Liverpool Playhouse Studio and National Theatre, 1988), Picture Palace (commissioned by the Women’s Theatre Group, 1988), A Hero’s Welcome (Women’s Playhouse Trust at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, 1989), A Rock in Water (Royal Court Young People’s Theatre at the Theatre Upstairs, 1989); Talking in Tongues (Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, 1991), Mules (Clean Break Theatre Company, 1996) and One Under (Tricycle Theatre, 2005) and other work has been produced by BBC Radio and Television, The Royal Court Theatre, Soho Theatre, Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, Clean Break Theatre, and The Royal National Theatre. Awards include the George Devine Award, The Pearson Plays on Stage Award and the Unity Theatre Trust Award. She was runner up for the Susan Smith Blackburn Award, and has been shortlisted for the Evening Standard Award.

She is interested in immigrant literature, postcolonial literature, women’s writing and contemporary theatre. She teaches Independent Creative Writing, Experiments with Form, Creative Dissertations and various modules on the MA Creative Writing.

Wendy Vaizey (Senior Lecturer, Creative Writing) writes prose fiction, short and long. She has published prose fiction, poems and literary criticism. Her research interests include psychoanalytical criticism and the work of critic and psychoanalytical philosopher Julia Kristeva, Julian of Norwich and the figure of the medieval anchoressa, as well as metaphor in the work of Iris Murdoch and John Banville. The latter formed the basis of her doctoral thesis. She is currently working on a novel, Indecendence. At Kingston University she teaches on Introduction to Creative Writing and on postgraduate modules. She is director of the Distance Learning Creative Writing MA and Admissions Tutor for Creative Writing.

Kingston Writing School

As a creative writing student you’ll be part of our community of writers, journalists, publishers and academics who form the Kingston Writing School, London’s most vibrant accredited writing school. The School provides undergraduate and postgraduate courses across a range of disciplines including creative writing, English literature, English language and linguistics, journalism and publishing.

With internationally acclaimed staff, high-quality teaching, innovative course design and an extracurricular activities programme that includes esteemed guests, writers in residence, short courses, sponsorships, and out-reach programmes that take writing and its benefits beyond the University, the Kingston Writing School has much to offer students, professionals and organisations interested in all types of writing.

See www.kingstonwritingschool.com

"The Kingston Writing School has become one of the most dynamic places for students and writers in the UK. It’s a pleasure to be part of it and to have seen it grow so quickly in such a short time."  
Professor Hanif Kureishi
Student feedback

“Completing work for the weekly Writers’ Workshops has been very useful. I’ve attended creative writing evening classes before, but the comments and criticism from other students on the MA is at a much higher level. For the workshops, you can choose your own genre: I’ve written mainly poetry and some prose. Next year, I will be able to specialise in poetry for the Special Study workshops.

“The module on publishing has also been much more interesting than I expected. A variety of speakers provided insights into the practical side of getting work accepted. Writers in different genres, as well as a publisher and agent, talked about their experiences from their differing points of view.”

Alice, MA in Creative Writing

“This course covers a wide spectrum of styles and types of writing. You can develop your expertise in one genre to a high standard, or try your hand at a variety of different forms of writing to find your own voice. One of the many highlights of the MA is the experience I have gained working with the range of talented writers and listening to readings and advice of the inspiring series of guest speakers that regularly visit Kingston University.

“I would recommend the course to writers who are looking to practise their writing in various areas, and to those wishing to gain critical and professional feedback. There is a particularly useful module that gives an excellent insight into the publishing world.”

Alex, MA in Creative Writing

“One of the main reasons I’ve chosen the MA in Creative Writing at Kingston University is the variety of genres you can choose from. I am writing poetry but I wanted to get involved with people who are writing different things so that I could experiment with other genres and learn from them too. I believe that the MA in Creative Writing not only gives you that opportunity but, more than that, you can also choose workshops that reflect exactly your style of writing.

“One of the most useful modules focuses on the practical side of being a writer: it offers tips from how to stay positive, to advice on how to present your work to get published.

“By the end of this course, I believe that I will have significantly improved my writing skills and that, by being in contact with other writers, I will become more confident to present myself as a writer (through readings, feedback and advice from both tutors and students).”

Katerina, MA in Creative Writing
Creative Writing courses

Entry requirements
Good degree (MFA: preferably 2:1 OR, if post-MA, MA in Creative Writing or similar), sample of creative writing (MA: 3,000 words; MFA: 5,000 words), personal statement (1,000 words) and references. See the course webpage for full details.

Consideration is given to nonstandard entrants, and all applicants are normally invited for an interview.

All non-UK applicants must meet our English language requirements. For this course it is IELTS of 6.5 overall with 7.0 in writing and special conditions for students who require a Tier 4 student visa. Please make sure you read our full guidance about English language requirements on the course webpage, which includes details of other qualifications we’ll consider.

Duration
• MA: One year full time or two years part time
• MFA: Two years full time or four years part time
• Low residency: One year full time or two years part time with non-compulsory campus days in October and January.

Attendance/delivery
These are modular programmes based on credit accumulation. You will be expected to study at home as well as attending classes at University. We offer a flexible programme to fit in with the work commitments of part-time students.

Assessment
Assessment methods include portfolios of exercises, edited and revised creative writing with evidence of extensive drafting, essays, presentations, research projects, critical commentary and a substantial piece of creative writing of publishable standard.

Further information

Contact details
Please contact the Faculty’s Admissions Office for an application form or with any further queries.
Admissions Office (Postgraduate Courses)
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Kingston University
Penrhyn Road
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey KT1 2EE
T: +44 (0)20 8417 2361/2378
F: +44 (0)20 8417 2292
E: fasspostgrad-info@kingston.ac.uk
www.kingstonwritingschool.com